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ECONOMIC, SOCIAL AND CULTURAL RIGHTS

Open-ended working group on structural adjustment programmes and economic, social and cultural rights

Note by the secretariat

1. In its decision 1999/104, the Commission on Human Rights authorized the open-ended working group on structural adjustment programmes and economic, social and cultural rights to meet for two weeks well in advance of, but at least four weeks prior to, the fifty-sixth session of the Commission with the mandate to: (i) consider the updated report of the independent expert and comments received thereon; (ii) elaborate basic policy guidelines on structural adjustment programmes and economic, social and cultural rights which could serve as a basis for a continued dialogue between human rights bodies and the international financial institutions; and (iii) report to the Commission at its fifty-sixth session.

2. Taking into account the related nature of the issues of foreign debt and structural adjustment policies, the Special Rapporteur, Mr. Reinaldo Figueredo, and the independent expert, Mr. Fantu Cheru, decided to submit a joint report for the consideration of the working group scheduled to meet in Geneva from 28 February to 10 March 2000. The joint report is contained in document E/CN.4/2000/51.

3. On 28 February 2000, the representative of the High Commissioner for Human Rights opened the third session of the working group. In view of the fact that there was no proposal for a chairperson and that for technical reasons the joint report of the independent expert and the Special Rapporteur had only been circulated that day, she proposed an adjournment to allow further consultations to take place. This proposal was agreed by all present.

4. Following consultations among regional coordinators, the working group resumed its session on 7 March 2000. On a proposal from the delegation of Sri Lanka on behalf of the Asian Group, Mr. Syed Mansur Raza (Pakistan) was elected Chairperson of the working group. At the meeting, it was agreed that the current session of the working group should be adjourned and that the Commission on Human Rights asked to extend the mandate of the working group and authorize it to hold another session for two weeks between the fifty-sixth and fifty-seventh sessions of the Commission.

5. The present document is submitted to the Commission in accordance with that decision.